

THE
ORIGINE
OF
ATHEISM
IN THE
Popish and Protestant
CHURCHES.

SHEW'N BY
DOROTHEUS SICURUS, 1684.

Made English, and a Preface added

By *E. B. Esquire.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishops-Head
in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1684.

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THE
TRANSLATOR
TO THE
READER.

THE Author of This small Piece is altogether unknown to me, and as to the Name I suppose it is a made one; because neither the place where it is Printed is expressed, nor the Printers name. I conjecture the Author of it to be a Calvinist, by reason of his great kindness for that Religion, as appears in his Title page, and throughout the Book, calling it every where the Evangelical Religion. Besides, in the beginning of the Third Section he falls very sharply upon the Lutherans and Arminians, as if none had been guilty of the Crimes there charged but they. But be this as it will, I am much better assured the Book was Printed beyond the Seas and imported into England, both by the Paper, Print, and Person of whom I had it.

I have taken the pains to turn it as well as I can into English, because I conceive it may be useful to some of my Countrey men who cannot read it in the Original; and if I should happen to be mistaken, the wonder will not be great.

And yet I cannot forbear taking a little more pains with it before I know what shall be the event of that which I have already undergone, because I conceive there may be many other Causes of the encrease of the

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abominable and comprehensive sin of Atheism besides those my Author hath mentioned.

It has been observed by many Learned men who have reflected on the tempers of the several Ages of the World, that the more ignorant times have been strongly prone to Superstition; whence, I suppose, was taken that common Proverb, that Ignorance is the mother of Devotion. There being no people so seemingly Devout as the Superstitious. It would make a man amazed to see what ridiculous things our Ancestors believed in the dark times of Popery here in England. No man can read the story of the Monk of Evesham which fills three whole leaves in Matth. Paris, wherein is a very exact account of all the Pains and Places of Purgatory. Or that in Gulielmus Newbrigenſis concerning the two Green children that were found at Wolpet in Suffolk, and came out of St. Martins Land, where the Sun never shines, and where they never see any greater light than that of a twilight, &c. I say, no man can read these passages in men of that great capacity that they were of in comparison of others who lived in the same times, but he must admire the credulity and ignorance of those Ages: and if the great men and Scholars could swallow such things, we may from thence conjecture how large the Faith and Belief of the meaner people was.

Anno 1196.

Lib. 1. c. 16.

Quin & videmus tempora ipsa, in Atheismum procliviora (qualia fuerunt Augusti Caesaris) tranquilla fuisse. Bacon de Superstitione.

On the other side, the Age of Augustus (in which times our Saviour took upon him our Nature) were, as Learned, Polite and flourishing times as ever hapned since the Creation of the World; but then they were the most corrupt too in point of Manners, and the most Atheistical in point of Belief.

That they were Learned will appear to any man that shall read the Works of Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Horace, Josephus, &c. And we may be assured that all the more Antient Greek and Latin Books which are since lost,

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lost, were all then extant, and how much the Romans in that Age envied the Grecians the reputation of Learning will thence appear too, tho' as Ammianus Marcellinus acquaints us about three Centuries after they became wholly careleß of Books and Learned men, Bibliothecis in Sepulchrorum ritu in perpetuum clausis, *Their Libraries being like Sepulchres shut up never to be opened more.* And a little higher. Pro Philosopho Cantor; & in locum Oratoris Doctor artium ludicrarum Accitur, They entertained instead of a Philosopher a Singing man, and instead of an Orator a Teacher of Ludicrous Arts; but that it was not so in the times I mention, is apparent from the great number of excellent Books that were then written.

L. 16. c. 6. p. 27.

But then the same Books will sufficiently acquaint us with the Universal corruption of manners that then raged throughout the whole world; and God be praised, tho' our times seem to be equal in Learning, they are not yet so bad as those were, in point of Morality.

Nor did Atheism and her Sister Hypocrisie rage less in that Age than debauchery. The Philosophy that was then in Vogue was the Epicurean, of which Sect most of the great men of Rome in those times were, as the Sect of the Sadduces prevailed upon the great men of the Jewish Nation at the same time which was not much better than the Epicurean Philosophy being but a sort of disguised Atheism.

Cicero de fine bon. l. c. 7.
Lact. de falsa relig. l. 3. c. 16.

Joseph. Ant. l. XVIII. cap. 2.

Nor was the covetous, ambitious, insolent and factious Hypocrisie of the Pharisees, less odious to God, and mischievous to all true Religion, than the contrary sin of Atheism; as appears by our Saviours conjoyning them always in his severe reprehensions and threats: and I doubt not but much of the Impiety of that age sprung from mens observing the Vanity of these outside Pretenders to piety, and that in meer abhorrence of their Villanies many run into the other extrem.

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Because it may seem a little strange to most men that these two effects should spring from such unlikely causes, I will presume to offer something as the Causes of them, tho' I shall perhaps please no body but my self by the attempt.

As to the first, Ignorance alone never produced any Devotion in any man. But because in every Age God has exerted and manifested his Power and Providence; those times that had least Natural Philosophy in them have attributed to him not only all those great things which he in reality did to demonstrate his Power and Care of men, but all those Works of Nature too which they could not understand, such as Eclipses and the like: by which means men became so Credulous that they easily believed any thing that was told them for want of ability to discern Truth from Falsehood, and others that were more Crafty did work upon this temper and drive on the Cheat for their own advantage, still more and more deluding the Superstitious and fearful, that they might increase their own Wealth and Power by their needlesß Superstition and foolish fear.

Apud imperi-
ros prodigii
loco accipiebatur
ipfa aqua-
rum penuria--
quod in pace
fors, seu natu-
ra; nunc fatum
& Ira Dei vo-
cabatur. Tac.
H. l. 4. c. 26.

Quibus quæ-
stui sunt capiti
Superstitione
Animi. Liv. l.
4.

Parum Philo-
sophiæ natura-
lis homines
inclinat in A-
theismum, at
Altiorum Sci-
entiam eos ad
Religionem
circumagere.
Baconis Ser-
fidelis, XVI.

But on the other side in those times in which Natural Philosophy hath flourished, men being by that enabled to search into the Natural and Second Causes of things, have many times from their discoveries concluded, that there was no God, but that all things succeeded in a Regular and Natural course; and if there happened some things which they could give no account of, they either disbelieved them, or thought there was a Natural Cause tho' they could not for the present find it out.

Again, the strange, and to men unsearchable order of the Divine Providence in the Government of the World, has to Learned Men and Ages, been very productive of Atheism; it is observed by Lactantius that

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that the prosperity of the Wicked, and the misery and affliction of the Good and Virtuous was the thing that gave Epicurus the first hint of setting up his Atheistick Philosophy.

To which if we please to add the pride of men who would be thought to understand every thing, to have no dependance, no not upon God himself; and to be under no restraint or aw: It will somewhat mitigate the wonder. St. Paul observeth that Knowledge puffeth up. And there is nothing so certain as that the most Learned and prosperous times which have ever gone together have been the most proud and insolent, and forgetful of God and all Goodness, despising all Religion and Vertue; whereas on the contrary, times of great Afflictions, Wars, Famines, Plagues, and the like, teach men their imbecillity, make them humble, and shew them how miserable and helpless they are without a God to protect and provide for them; and I do truly believe that more of the Atheism of this and all former Ages have sprung from the Pride and Security of men who thought they stood in need of no God, by reason of their wealth and greatness, than from any other cause whatsoever.

Prosperity is not only the cause of Pride but of Sensuality and of all other sorts of debauchery; men that have Wealth at their command, and leisure and liberty to imploy it as they please, do too often make a very bad use of it, and when they have multiplied their sins against heaven till they can scarce hope for Mercy from that infinite goodness that dwells there, and debauched and corrupted their Natures, that they have but little more of a man than the shape and speech left, they then begin to think it their interest that there should be no God to punish them: and so endeavour to persuade themselves and others that indeed there is none. And I am persuaded, God in his Justice gives up many of them.

De falsa Sapi-
entia. l. 3. c. 17.

Adversæ deir-
de res admo-
nuerunt Religi-
onum; confu-
gimus in capi-
tolum ad Ie-
os, ad sedem
Jovis. O. M.
Liv. l. 5.

Nullum cri-
men abest faci-
nusq; libidinis,
ex quo
Paupertas Ro-
mana perit---
& turpi frege-
runt secula
Luxu. Divitiis
molles, Furven.
S. r. 6.

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them to a mind void of Judgment, so that they become incurable to all but God; and that they are almost as miserable as the damned.

To all this give me leave to add one Cause more that seems almost peculiar to our times, the *Factions and Divisions in Religion*, and the fierce disputes, and fearful wars and devastations that have happened there-upon in Christendom, within little more than a Century of years. Those men that are not very fond of Religion being in these disputes and quarrels a kind of Lookers on, have remarked both the great mistakes and foul play of these Contenders, and have sometimes been able to satisfy themselves that both sides were in the wrong, and have much oftner suspected they might be so, and have from thence drawn one general Conclusion, that perhaps all this bustle was about a thing that had no real being in the world.

And of those that have been engaged in Parties in these horrible Broils, I doubt not but when they have seen things fall out quite contrary to their expectation, tho' some have thereby been weaned from the world, and from thence have inferred how vain it was to put their trust in man or any thing else on this side the grave: yet others have turn'd Atheists, and called in question both that God and Providence that governs the World, because things did not go just as they expected they should.

The very difficulty of chusing the true Religion, amidst the various and contrary pretences, hath made others turn mere Atheists to save themselves the trouble of examining their several pretences.

The very weariness and dissatisfaction that others have met with in frequent changing their Religion have reduced them at last to a perfect indifference for all, and some have taken sanctuary in down-right infidelity and Atheism.

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The abominable Hypocrisie of the late times when all the Villanies that men could be guilty of, were ushered in by Fasts and Sermon upon Sermon from morning till midnight with a prodigious Zeal, and no less apparent Knavery and interest at the bottom, have had a very ill effect upon others, and made them conclude against all Religion for the sakes of these wicked Pretenders to it.

The horrid perjuries and abominable deceptions which have of later years been practised by our pretended godly men, have had their share too in this mischief.

When there have at any time happened differences in Religion, they have not only excited men to use the utmost of their Reasons and Learning against each other, but Passion and Wit too have found their admission, and the bitter Sarcasms, biting Jeers, and sharp Scoffs that they have made use of each against other, have by degrees made all Religion cheap and contemptible, and exposed both the parties to the scorn of their common Enemy, and especially of Atheists.

A man that shall reflect seriously on all this, will hardly wonder that there should be so much Atheism and Impiety as there is, but rather that there is any thing else to be found amongst us; and certainly if the Notion and Sense of a God were not woven into the Nature of Mankind, and engraven so deep in his mind, that it is utterly impossible totally to deface it: And lastly, if God himself had not interested himself for the preservation of Religion, it would, it must have been long ere this time totally extirpated.

Religion and Civil Government do mutually support each other, he that has no Religion, deserves no Faith nor Trust, he that does not fear God truly, will never honour his King heartily, nor serve him stoutly and

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faithfully. It has not been much regarded perhaps, but there is nothing so certain, as that a Ranting, Debauched, godless Gallant is the worst of Subjects; if it were possible he could be faithful (which when it shall become his interest to be otherwise, is not to be expected) yet his Crimes are infectious, and he carries Gods curse where ever he goes.

I grant he that will rebel against his Prince for Conscience-sake is a dangerous Subject, but then he that pretends to be Faithful and Loyal without it, is no better. Now this is another ill effect of our Divisions, that whilst some are seduced by Ill Principles into disobedience to our Laws, and hatred of the Government; others have taken the liberty to vent another sort of Principles that are destructive of Humane Society, Virtue and all Government both Civil and Ecclesiastical; so that betwixt them both we are fitted for Ruine.

Now both these insufferable mischiefs have been spread and propagated by the Liberty of the Press, which hath Midwiv'd into the World a number of Atheistical debauched Books as well as Factions and disloyal pieces; and the former of these are as destructive to Government as they are to Religion and good manners, without which no Government can subsist long.

*And now to apply all this to my purpose, I say, the worst thing that can betide a man on this side Hell, is to be given up by God to vile and base Affections, and that which the Apostle calls *Οεοσυμία*, the hatred of God, which is the forerunner of Atheism, is the worst and basest, the most devilish affection that can take possession of a man, but yet is too frequently the effect of Debauchery, Schism, Inconstancy and neglect of the Service of God, and therefore it is the interest of all those that have any spark of Goodness or Virtue left, to desert the paths that lead to this Precipice, to abhor all*
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that company that may lead them insensibly into this Gulf of eternal Ruine, and destroy all their Reputations and temporal happiness into the bargain.

2. That it is the interest of all that are exalted to any places of Power and Profit, that have any share in the Government to be as tender of Religion as of the Apple of their Eye; to discountenance Debauchery and Immorality, and especially Atheism, Blasphemy, Perjury, common Swearing, &c. to the utmost of their powers, and however never to employ or trust men of infamous lives or wicked Principles.

3. That it is the interest of all men to endeavour to put an end to our Factions in Religion by all the Lawful means that can be thought of.

4. Seeing all these miseries I have expressed have sprung from the abuse of Liberty and want of the execution of good Laws, and that we see whither a licentious freedom will at last lead us, let us heartily submit to the necessary restraints of Discipline and Government and dread no slavery like that of being the bondmen of Lust, and the drudges of the Devil.

And as to our Dissenters, I desire they would seriously consider the State of the Churches beyond the Seas, of which this Author hath given so exact an account, and then reflect upon the little good they have got or done by all their oppositions to that Religion which God by his Providence has established amongst us, how many horrid sins they have been guilty of under the mask of Religion, and perhaps more out of ignorant Zeal than intentional Wickedness: and lastly, how deeply they are concern'd in the Guilt of all the Debauchery and Atheism of the present Age, by weakening the force and abating the reverence that is due, and in all probability would otherwise have been paid to our Civil and Ecclesiastical Governours.

Principi est ea
maximè curare
quæ ad Deos
pertinent, nam
& metuunt mi-
nus nè quid in-
justi accipiunt
à talibus—
& minus infi-
diantur, ut
Deos habenti
Socios, Arist.
Polit. l. 5. c. 11.

Licentia urbi-
um, aliquando
disciplinâ me-
tûq; nunquam
sponte confi-
det. Sen. ep. 97.

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And because the very root of all our Divisions is a quarrel about our Ceremonies, I desire, they would reflect seriously upon the last Section of this discourse, and if they cannot be satisfied with the proceedings of their Superiours, yet at least to abate somewhat of their hitherto inflexible stubbornness.

And because the sense of Foreigners is like to be more prevalent with them, than that of English men who are suspected to be interested, I will give them for a Conclusion the sense of a Learned French Protestant in the same case. The person I mention is the Author of the History of Calvinism and Popery in Parallel, or, an Apology for the Reformers and Reformation written against Mr Maimbourg's History of Calvinism, part. 1. chap. 20.

"It is fit to be known in the first place that We, (saith he) would not enter into a Schism with a Church, nor make any great controversie for a small number of Ceremonies: which being of no great use, do yet do no great injury to Religion; and for this Cause we cannot but be concerned to see a number of good and devout people beyond the Seas, out of an excessive Zeal for the simplicity of Worship, divorce themselves from the Religion Established by the Prince and State, because of a few Ceremonies of small importance, the use of which they will not endure. Schism is the greatest of all evils; and if it were true that these Ceremonies did some harm; yet they can never do so much mischief as the scandal of Separation and Division do. But yet after all this, I believe these Ceremonies are innocent, and that these men are very imprudently offended at them.

This

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This Gentleman is no friend to Ceremonies as appears by this, and in what follows is very importunate with our Governours to lay them aside in favour of the Dissenters; and yet he cannot but call the Separation made on that account a Schism, and an imprudent and scandalous one too, and pronounce our Ceremonies innocent, which is enough to condemn our Dissenters, and make them liable to answer to God and Man for all the misery, sin and bloodshed that have already hapned in this quarrel or shall hereafter happen.

And if the little Religion that is left in the World do with so much difficulty maintain it self against the Atheism that grows upon the age, now that the Established Religion is defended by Laws, made venerable by a few innocent Ceremonies, and the Countenance of our King and Government; I leave it to all men to judge what would follow upon the breaking down our Fences, and exposing it naked and without Authority to all that please to put a helping hand to the pulling it down.

LHB

T H E
O R I G I N E
O F
A T H E I S M

Both in the Popish and Reformed
C H U R C H E S.
Shew'n by *DOROTHEUS SICURUS.*

Translated out of Latin.

HE that shall compare the Present Times with those that are Past, shall hardly fall upon an Age of more solid Learning, excellent discourse, or ingenuous Arts, than the Present. But then alas we find by experience, that there was never any thing so great but it left room for its own Ruine: for by how much the more, Learning and Arts have spread themselves, into so much the narrower bounds is Piety contracted; so that while the number of Learned men increaseth, that of the Pious is daily diminished. Not only the Jesuits, but the Members of the other Orders, though despised by the former in comparison of themselves, do abundantly shew that the Church of *Rome* is replenished with many Learned men. Hence many have admired how it should come to pass that this Religion which is composed with so
strict

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strict, superstitious, and artificial a respect to the well-being and Polity of the Pope and Jesuits should not only abound with Atheists, but even seem to be the source of Atheism it self. Those famous men, the Elegant *Theophilus Spizelius*, the Religious *Antonius Reiserus*, the once most Reverend *Joannes Mullerus*, the Zealous *Gisbertus Voetius*, the Learned *Josua Arndius*, though they have otherwise at large discoursed of Atheism, yet they do not touch this business. But to him that rightly considers it, the thing will not be obscure: for *Italy* where the Seat of the Popedom is, produceth sublime and active Wits, who when they grow up, accustom themselves to humane Learning, History, Criticks, Politicks, and those other studies which belong to Publick affairs and the secrets of State, who in the mean time despise the studies of Piety, Scripture and Divinity as mean and easie things which will contribute very little to their Reputations in the world.

And altho' *Petrus Bembus* is long since dead, yet there is still some or other of the number of the holy Cardinals and Bishops who can suggest seasonably to a young Divine, intent upon the Bible, that *those trifles do not become a grave man*. So that these are only Divines in name, while they pursue the aforesaid sorts of Learning, or any other rather than Theology; esteeming it fitter for men of small capacity, and their Curates, than for men of those Elevated parts they are of. The Jesuits whose supreme Law is their Interest, do here dexterously lead their followers; for being weary of Divinity and in our times very ignorant and unexpert in it, they are very anxious and careful in the cultivating the Arts of Administring publick affairs to their own Ends; raising and fomenting Wars, searching into the secrets of State, deceiving

deceiving the minds of Princes, in finding out curious things, and such as may best serve to divert the Court Ladies, and in conveying Gun-powder with a Godly simplicity under Kings; and in other such like mysteries proper to this most useful sort of men. They will not like their Predecessors be troublesome to Printers in the publishing Commentaries and discourses on the Bible, they have their *Pererius*, *Bonfrelius*, *Cornelius Alapide*, *Jansenius*, *Lorinus*, *Estius*, *Justinianus*, *Masius*, *Sanctius*, *Pintus* and *Tirinus*, and those that take pleasure in them, may make use of them, and they who having nothing else to do, may write more. The present life needs other studies, *Jeremias Drexellius* and *Carolus Scrivanius* have written enough for Devotion: Now let the *Italians* help the *Italians*, the books of *Nicolas Machiavel*, and the discourses of *Trajanus Boccalini* on *Parnassus* are to be now employed. The present Pope sets a good example to the Universal Church; who that he may seasonably and prudently curb the forces of the great *Turk* which hang as a cloud over *Italy*, the Seat of the Popedom, spares neither Council, Labour, nor charge, that not only *Vien-na* may be delivered, but also that the Wars may be continued against the *Turks* by the Emperour and his Confederates, and not be hindred by the *French King*.

But then how the Great men, Kings and Princes should be induced and persuaded to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the study of Piety and good Works, and diverted from Adulteries, the too great oppression of their Subjects, from covering that which is not their own, from rash and unjust wars; these belong to others, and not to the Pope, though he be reputed the supreme Bishop. The Popedom is now upheld by Arms, and all other things are trifles. I grant the Church of *Rome* hath not had a better or wiser

Pope than the present is, in this last Age. But then all that love the Christian Religion and Christ, cannot digest this; that he so carelessly connives (that I may represent it smoothly) at the manifest and apparent sins which strike the eyes of the whole world, of his most Christian, most Catholick Kings, and the Protectors of the Faith, and yet this good Pope, if compared with others, does not once frown, but clearly dissembles at all things, lest he should lose his Authority, his Revenues, and his very Kingdom; which is not obscurely aimed at by some body. I know not whether it be the part of a wise man to retain the antiquated custom of sending Consecrated Clouts and Blankets, with the great peril of his Reputation, and in the mean time be too Prodigal and careless of the Episcopal Correction and Admonition to the performance of our duties, the amendment of our Neighbours, and lastly of all those things which tend to the good of some whole kingdoms. Some esteem the delays of this Pope in the conferring the Cardinals hats, and other Ecclesiastical promotions as a principal part of his wisdom; nor do I deny that there is in this a secret which I can easily conjecture the cause of: but to dispose of them at the Will and Recommendation of the Lord Protector of the Faith (which new title is now on the Anvil at *Rome*, perhaps without the consent of the King of *Poland*) the Duke of *Lorraine*, and the Count of *Starenburg*, may seem to the wiser part of mankind too too profane and remote from the Divine and Apostolical prudence. Alas whither does the Pope fall! how barefaced does Atheism approach this man! These great men have excellently plaid their parts against the common Enemy, and done that which becomes such persons, and therefore the Pope is bound to prefer their Clients, and those they recommend,

mend, in the most Holy Church redeemed with the very blood and Torments of Jesus Christ? that so the Body and Spouse of Christ may pay that debt which the King of *Italy* owes to these Noble men for preventing the dangers which threatned his kingdom. But thus our Lords the Popes do always proceed where they dispose of Ecclesiastical preferments according to the pleasure of great men, whatever becomes of the Edification and Salvation of the Church and its Members.

II. The Youth of that Religion in the mean time being seasoned with these studies and examples (if they have any, and have not forgot and lost all in the Camp,) is imployed as occasion serves in those offices which become void, and pursues the same course of life; for the Church and Church affairs are either committed to some Curate, who is for the most part very ignorant, or are managed by these men so carelessly and negligently that they seem to mind nothing less. They are wholly taken up with the sublime Speculations of the Mathematicks, Criticks, the secrets of Polity, the Rights of Majesty, &c. but they have either never tasted at all, or lapt like the dogs in the *Nile*, the Institutions and Compendiums of Divinity, the methods of Doctrine, and the Expressions and Phrases of the Bible and approved Classick Authors; in the interim they are unconcern'd for the truth of the Religion of their forefathers, and never attain the knowledge of the *Roman* Catechism, in the course of their whole lives; being oppressed with a multitude of Beautiful books, which tend more to their Reputation and Advantage, and the burthen of other affairs. I have seen many Libraries where the Catechism was not to be found. And from thence it proceeds that it is so scarce amongst them that I could not

without much difficulty get a Copy of it for my own use. And thus they live from time to time till some Calamity, Temptation or disease awake them, and separate them a little from those vain tho' sublime studies, and then in their distresses they seek solid comforts, correspondent to their great Wits. For as for the Mass, the Invocation of Saints and Angels, Purgatory, the infallibility of the Pope of *Rome*, and the rest of those Whimsies they keep them in View, but like Learned men despise and scorn them, as not built upon so much as a rational foundation: for without doubt he must be rather an Ass than a Learned man, that should from his heart believe these fooleries. They either have not the Works of the Reformed Divines, or the Pope and Inquisition will not suffer them to read them. For they so severely prohibit the reading of them especially in *Italy* and *Spain*, that they will not suffer their own Answers of our Books to be publickly sold, lest men should detect the weakness and falshood of their Superstition, from the opposite Arguments and their frivolous Replies; tho' all our Arguments, according to the custom of these men, are represented with the utmost disadvantage, being mutilated, lamed, feigned and falsified; which was observed long since by a Learned man *Edwin Sands*. These men, I say, being overtaken by Temptations, examining the whole frame of the Popish Religion, as such, with their acquired and experienced Judgment, find at last, that it is nothing but a pack of meer frauds, introduced of purpose to delude the silly Rabble, preserve the Majesty of the Pope, and uphold the Monasteries, and in them especially the Idle, Lazy Jesuites and Monks. Which things being thus dissected, and survey'd with great care, the sum is easily cast up, and is no more than this, *All Religion is a*

Europa Speculum, or a View or survey of the State of Religion in the Western parts of the World, p. 121.

meer

meer cheat, all seek their own Advantage; some directly, others obliquely, What if at last in truth, *there is no God*? for I am fully convinced, that no man of good Learning and sense, ever entered the *Roman Church* for the sake of Religion, and the quieting of his Conscience without any other bye-ends: for the chiefeft parts of Popery are so contrary not only to the Scriptures, but to common sence almost, that they are forced to patch up a parcel of Fables and Traditions of all sorts to recommend them to the most rude and ignorant part of the People, which yet they will scarce allow to be true; from whence it comes to pass, that they can neither understand nor teach any thing of more certainty than these false Principles, which yet is absolutely necessary here, when the Salvation of the Soul is under consideration, and the business is to be transacted with the most perfect Rhetorician, that is, with our own Conscience, where there is need of the most certain maxims to enable us to resist the Devil, when sin or our own Conscience of it tempts us. For in matters of Faith, we cannot effectually make use of any other testimonies than those of the Scripture, nor can any invented reasons be brought, which the Animal man shall not find to be such, except those of God. Therefore the Scripture, because it only is certain, doth most instruct and confirm the Conscience. If any thing besides this is feigned, because it is uncertain, it cannot secure and quiet the Conscience. And thus far for the present of the Popish Religion.

III. I come now to the Protestant Churches, and here if they who call themselves the Reformed *Lutherans* and *Arminians*, did as much abhor and detest the thing, as they do the name and profession of *Epicures* and *Sadduces*, they would be no less careful of abstain-

abstaining from Vice, and industrious in the exercise of Virtue and Piety; than they are now obstinately engaged in the wickedness and debauchery, and an impious course of life. Nor would they be less careful of keeping the Commandments of the Best and greatest God; than they are now fearless of the Deity. But to speak the truth, almost all of us do rather fear the Envy, and detest the Name, than bear any Aversion in our minds for the thing, which would otherwise be testified by our Lives, Actions, and Manners. For what shall I say? as I live, and as I desire Christ should shew me mercy, I am ashamed and grieved to speak how we live. Can they believe the Immortality of the Soul, who live little better than beasts? or can they be thoroughly perswaded that there is a reward laid up in Heaven for the Righteous, a punishment appointed in Hell for the Wicked, who scarce fear to break the Commandments of God in any thing; as if they thought GOD were an empty and vain sound, and that their Souls should perish with their Bodies? and altho' we should grant that there are some who fear God, and doubt not but he will assign Rewards and inflict Punishments according as every man has deserved, yet they are certainly very few, and scarce so many as the gates of *Thebes*, and the mouths of the rich *Nile*: and yet how much less is the number of those whom the dread of the divine Justice can reclaim from Wickedness and mischief, or perswade to amend their lives? but what need is there of many words? No man vigorously pursues heavenly things despising humane, no man is sensible of the Anger of God against sin, no man changes his Vices for Virtue, no man cures his offences committed by the least acts of Charity, no man is recalled from Baseness by Modesty, or from

from sin by the fear of God; the lives of all are so polluted with great and abominable crimes, that I need say nothing of the less and almost daily faults?

IV. For altho' if we will judge rightly, Luxury is the fault of every Age, the over sumptuous expences in Diet, the excessive magnificence of Dinners and Suppers, Surfeits, Revellings, Whoredoms, Adulteries, Violence, Injustice, neglect of good manners, and the like; are charged, as *Seneca* observes, by the men of all Ages upon their own times, nor was there ever yet any Generation of men without faults: and as the same Philosopher goes on, of this our Ancestors have complained, we do, and our children shall; that the Manners of men are totally subverted, Villany reigns, and the affairs of Mankind go on impairing and descending to all manner of Crimes: yet to speak but the truth, in this Age of ours, the liberty of committing any Villany is encreased to a prodigious height: The neglect of all Order and Discipline, the Pest and Corruption of good manners, and whatever else of Vice, impiety and turpitude can be conceived, have all of them so prevailed, that Impiety and Atheism do almost seem to have invaded the lives of men, and to have erected their kingdom in Christendom; and to conclude, there seems to be but little liberty allowed to Laws, and the utmost that is possible to Lust. I durst Avert, that in this corrupted and debauched Age, all sorts of wickedness have prevailed to that degree, that it is scarce possible to add any thing to it, nor does any improvement seem possible. For what sort of Wickedness and Villany is wanting, which if it were supposed to be thrown in, would make our times worse and wickedder in any part? seeing we are come to this, that we cannot endure to be told of our Vices, nor patiently bear the reproof
that

that we have justly deserved, or if there be some few that can endure it, yet even there, according to the Proverb, we do but sing and tell stories to the Deaf. Either I am deceived with the *Tragedian*, or this is not the way to Heaven. Alas, alas, what is become of Christian Piety?

V. But omitting unprofitable complaints by which we shall gain nothing, or very little, having thought very often with my self, from whence this foolishness, and vast and boundless Calamity could proceed, I resolved at last to inquire into the causes of it, and why we should go on so inconsiderately, negligently, and as it were, with our eyes shut, in a thing of that nature, that only our safety depends upon it; but it may seem to be safety it self. For the causes of this mischief being once found out and published, it will not, (as I conceive) be difficult afterwards, to find out some remedies for this evil, which if they prevail not upon the obstinate, what hope is left I know not, and whether there is any or no, God only knows.

VI. And in the first place, I conceive, the principal and chiefest cause of this, to proceed from the neglect of Youth and Schools: for in the first place, and before all other things, Magistrates ought to take care that parents should educate their children well, and tincture them betimes with Christian Piety, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and holy manners. And certainly it is very much the interest of all Christian Societies, that both the Civil and Ecclesiastical Governours should take care that the Youth be rightly and devoutly educated, both by their Parents and Schoolmasters and Tutors in the University, because in this does almost the total safety of any Community consist, and therefore they ought to be very diligent to see that these men do their duties in the Religious instructing

fructing of their children, and in the improving their Scholars and Pupils by an excellent discipline. If this had been done or might yet be taken care of ; certainly, Atheism and Vice had never grown to that height they now are at, and without this, no Laws will effectually prevail. For whereas Laws punish Villanies that are already committed, a good Education prevents the perpetration of those crimes that may deserve a chastisement ; and whereas Laws correct Vices, Education restrains them, from whence we may take our measures to observe how much greater efficacy is in good Education, than in the best Laws. That I may not add, that those who are ill brought up, do afterwards put off all fear and reverence of those Laws that are made to punish crimes. And therefore this was always one of the first cares of prudent Magistrates ; not what penalties they should inflict upon lewd and wicked men, but how they might prevent their Subjects from doing ill things. And because they thought the most likely way to effect this, was to accustom their Youth to live Well and Religiously from their Infancy, and to see that their Parents did Institute and Educate their children as they ought, they esteemed it no small part of their duty to take care of it. But how careless the Dutch parents are of performing this duty, and how indulgent and remiss they are towards their off-spring, is known to every body. Their children accustom themselves to delights and pleasures from their tenderest years, neither do they abstain from filthy and obscene discourse, or impious and blasphemous words against God. They wear Silk and rich cloaths of various colours, Military ornaments, Ingraven Breast-plates, foreign habits, and great sleeves : they do all things fiercely, confidently and impudently, and nothing

This, and several other passages make me think the Author was a Hollander.

with modesty and shamefacedness ; they revere not their Parents : for here, to the amazement of all men, the children have acquired an absolute dominion over their Parents, and are in possession of a liberty not to reverence the Ancient, nor bear patiently with their equals ; and to conclude, they do not so much desire as in fact shew, that they can do what they list : they are neither deterred from evil by the reverence of men, nor fear of God, of which last they scarce ever heard : they take no notice of Religion and Piety, and less of Virtue and Honesty. And to what purpose are many words ? Parents in our times do so corrupt their Children by their own lewd examples, that they cannot correct them with any Authority : for he that teacheth that in his own manners which he detesteth in his children, accuseth himself of his own crimes, whilst he chides them for theirs. With what face I beseech you, can a man blame his child which he hath corrupted by his ill example ? when yet notwithstanding a Parent ought to speak nothing before his children, which is not fit to be spoken, nor to do any thing that is indecent or dishonest to be done : but should rather live so honestly and religiously, that his children may propound his way of living as a pattern to be imitated, and by his example, as in a glass, learn from their Infancy what to pursue and what to avoid. Let Parents therefore remember that they are under a necessity of living well and honestly, and to take the utmost care that not the least footstep of disorder and turpitude may appear in their lives, that they may with the greater Authority correct the manners of their children, lest those vices they reprehend in them, should be found in themselves, and so their reproofs lose their weight, and by their own defaults the Authority of a Parent should become vile and light with their own children.

VII. And

VII. And now when children are grown up and fit to be disposed of to Masters, to be especially then accustomed to all right and honest Actions; and be instructed in Piety, good manners, and learning: what then? Why I am both ashamed and unwilling to speak, but yet I will do it, rather because I must, than because I would; and in the first place, there is hardly any Schools to be found with us, but then how few good Schools in *Curland*, *Lithuania*, *Livonia*, *Swedeland*, *Denmark*, in the Dukedom and Marquisate of *Cleave*, and in other Countries professing the Evangelical Religion, God knows, I found in my travels? yea, and how few of those which are to be found in *Holland*, can bear the scrutiny of Religious and Pious men, who seek the welfare of that Common-wealth, and of Religion, without any respect of Persons; many besides my self can be my witnesses. Without doubt our Religion had made a greater progress, if we had taken care to found more Schools. For, we can never ascribe the great barbarity and ignorance of the Boors of *Livonia* and *Curland*, that I may not call it their Atheism, to any other cause than the want of Schools. And the Devil and his Instruments did not in any thing so much contradict the Eminent Lord *John Fisber*, Superintendent general of *Livonia*, as in his introducing Schools and Catechising. And the Lord *Spencer*, and Lord *Horly*, have since experienced and perhaps do still experience the like Diabolical stratagems, these excellent men being the greatest of all Enemies to their kingdom. The Jesuits have learned more wit at our charge, and our neglects have afforded them a very plentiful harvest. But that which is yet more wonderful in this business is this, that those in whose power it is to Erect Schools in the Villages, altho' they have children of their own, which for want

*If our Laws
concerning
School-masters
be put in execu-
tion, nothing of
this nature can
happen in Eng-
land.*

of Orthodox Masters they are forced to commit to the Jesuits, and so run upon an apparent and visible mischief; yet these, upon certain unknown private and domestick interests, hinder the effecting this most excellent and salutary counsel by all manner of ways, upon certain and frivolous pretences. I do very much fear that in the great day of Judgment the famous and excellent virtues of the Heathens will condemn our base Avarice and improbity; especially the Charity of *Cimon* towards the Poor, and the honesty, justice and fidelity of the two *Cato's*.

VIII. But even where there are Schools, many Masters (for I speak not this of all) do but prepare the way for Atheism. For they for the most part that they may win the love of the children, and not offend the Parents, treat their Scholars too remissly and softly, and do as it were overmuch loosen the reins of discipline, neither restraining them from Vice by chastisement, nor reducing them to Virtue by good advice. The inquiry is not now, what a Master should desire in his Scholar, but the Scholar would have in the Master: They on the other side do not ground their Scholars in Christian Piety, instruct them in the fear of God; nor form them to Modesty and the other Virtues. They think they have mighty well and faithfully perform'd their parts; if they have in some degree instructed them in Learning and Arts; but as for the knowledge of Piety, the sence of the Catechism, the Articles of Faith, with their foundations in Scripture, as no body inquires after these things, so no body delivers them, nor in truth can they; the Masters themselves being very ignorant of those holy things. I confess some begin and end with Prayers, but with what fervour and devotion of mind it is not convenient to speak. Nor do they as they ought, shew themselves innocent
and

and affable as Parents, but remiss and dissolute as companions. And hence it comes to pass that the Scholars despise their masters, and become fierce and insolent, loathing all that is good, and of an insufferable stubbornness.

IX. I wish the Ecclesiastical and Civil Governours could well consider the greatness of this affair, and in chusing School-masters would yield nothing to their affections, affinity, relations, domesticks, servants or maids, nothing to the recommendations or intreaties of their acquaintances, or even to mercy; and certainly every body is not to be made a School-master, upon any bodies recommendation, seeing the Common-wealth is so much concern'd and interest'd to have good and Learned masters set up, who may inure the minds of children to Piety towards God, Humanity towards men, and adorn them with ingenuous manners and disciplines.

X. And yet it is impossible to represent how careless men now adays are in this great concern. I remember in my Travels, I visited a fine City belonging to one of the States of *Holland*, where I knew a man who by the favour of the Magistrates, was constituted chief practick Physician of the place, and when his Pension would not maintain him and his Family, the Magistrates as an Addition to it, gave him the Government of their School, though he was utterly incapable of it, and very ignorant of those things that might fit him for that employment. I speak nothing of the Book *de Religione Medici*, this is enough for a wise man. On the other side, the best and most Learned School-masters, who are of approved Lives, of commendable manners, and of a known diligence in teaching, scarce find any acceptance any where; the unlearned having so insinuated themselves in the friendship

ship and acquaintance of the great men, and prevailed so far upon them, that they think none are so fit to undertake the care of teaching children as these, when they are not better fitted for it, than an Ass is to be a Musician. Nor can they teach any thing that is worth one farthing: so great is their ignorance, and yet they have an excellent faculty of concealing it. Who knows not of what force kindred, the marriage of a Kinswoman, or maid servant if it so happen, is in the disposing of these preferments? and when by reason of their ignorance and want of experience, they find themselves destitute of that Authority which for the most part attends Learning: to counterbalance the reputation of the other School-masters who are in some places numerous, they do not only loosen the reins of discipline, that they may by that means increase their Schools, but promise marriages to some of the great men; by which means they arrive at that reputation for Learning and Orthodoxy, that whereas before they were truly thought the most silly, wrangling heterodox fellows that could be, in a moment they become most Learned, Religious and Conformable. So much is the man changed! I will illustrate this by an example after the School-custom; not long since two Students were call'd successively out of the University of *Konigsberg* to undertake the Government of the School of one of the principal Cities of *Livonia*. The first of these by the marriage of one of the great Church-mens daughters, was promoted in the Cathedral Church without any difficulty, and laid down his School-masters place with great reputation. The latter, who brought with him a wife which he had married at *Konigsberg*, tho' he left no stone unturned, and was perhaps equal to the former in solid Learning, could never to this day attain the honour

honour of being a member of the Cathedral Church, and I fear never, &c. Of so much greater value are women than men, that the husband shines by a light he derives from the wife.

- * XI. Now when the School-masters suffer the youth committed to their trust, to be debauched and run headlong into all kinds of Wickedness and Villany, whose business it was with all possible care, industry and severity to curb their boldness and impudence, and correct their fierceness, petulancy and youth, prone to Luxury by seasonable instruction, admonition and chastisement; what hope is there when they become men, and come to a greater age, of reforming them! for when both their Parents and School-masters suffer them in all sorts of Vices, and let them do what they list, and never take any care to restrain their exorbitances, what wonder is it if they become unable or hardly able to live without those Vices which they have been accustomed to from their very infancy? so does custom become a second nature. Nor is it at all probable, that he that has lived loosely, and ill in his youth, should become honest and sober when he arrives at manhood; nor that he that was wickedly brought up, should be reformed when he is a man. So much is there in the habits that first are taken up by children, and confirmed by a long use. From whence comes it that there are so many Adulterers, debauchers of Women, Knaves, Drunkards, desperate and prodigal Spendthrifts and Gamesters, so many Citizens contaminated with all manner of Villany and Wickedness, but from this one fountain of the ill and perverse Education and Government of Children? for they that attribute the debauchery of the Age to the Reformation, do without doubt need Physick. That loose
and

and impious Education and ill discipline, which is now in use added to the negligence and dissoluteness of the Magistrates, who are more intent upon their own private and domestick advantages than the publick good; that I may make no complaints against the Princes of the World, must certainly bear the blame of all this Wickedness. Thus you have the first and principal cause of the present Atheism in my opinion.

XII. And now I come to the next, which is the contempt of the Clergy and Church-men. I will not at large inquire into the Causes of this, nor whether many of them have not brought this disesteem upon themselves by their own faults: tho' it is not possible that our Clergy should not be vile in the eyes of men, while they see how basely and poorly they seek Church Functions and Preferments: how careless they are of their people, and unconcern'd for the Glory of God. Now I say; when men see all this, is it possible that they should not despise those who seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ? And the very Clergy too, observe at time the small esteem the people have of them, as appears by their frequent complaints in their Pulpits, tho' they either know not, or are pleased to dissemble their knowledge of the Cause, as if they abhorred the remedy more than the disease. I will only add this, that the contempt of the Person, for the most part brings with it a contempt of the Office. Now how deep this is rooted in the minds of the men of this Age, no man can be ignorant. I remember I heard a person of no mean consideration at *Amsterdam* use these words, That he *valued his Cat as much as he did his Minister*. Thus did an Evangelical hearer speak of an Evangelical Pastor. If any that were not of the Established Church had thought

thought a little undervaluingly of them it might have been born, provided it had not been attended with publick scandal, because they have nothing to do with them, as *S. Paul* bore with the *Athenian* Philosophers, who call'd him *Babler*, and a setter forth of *strange Gods*: but when the Auditors who are committed to his care despise his Admonitions and Doctrine, as if they were too good and learned in the Scriptures, to be instructed by such a man, as it does not seldom happen that those who have wealth and power in the world, will hardly submit themselves to the Church-discipline and instruction: there I say, the contempt is not to be indured, because attended with the contempt of the Ministry, and tending to the great damage of the hearers. And to this purpose is that of the Apostle, *let no man despise thee*. For I cannot allow the Exposition of *Chrysostom* and others, who think that *Titus* was admonished to behave himself so, both as to his Doctrine and Life, as not to deserve to be despised. For altho' it is most certain, that integrity of manners does add to the Authority of the Teacher, and render his Doctrine more acceptable; and that a good life, as *Primasius* saith, makes the Doctrine of more Authority: yet the very sound and sense of the words shew, that the Apostle here does not prescribe what *Titus* should do, but what others should not do. *Joh. Crocius* upon this place takes it, that the Apostle did not here speak to *Titus*, but to the whole Church of *Crete*, and ordains, that seeing *Titus* was commanded to encounter with their vices and errors, and to defend the Truth and Religion, no man should be so prodigal of his Salvation, as to despise either his Person or his Office, or prefer himself before him, as better or more worthy. For the word *περὶ σόνους* here used

Tit. II. 15.

The Origine of Atheism.

as is observed by *S. Hierom. Witteberg.* and *Fr. Bald-
nin. Comm.p. 1501.* *B.* signifies thus much. When any
one being confident of himself that he is better than
another, despiseth him whom he thinks beneath him.
And as being above him in wisdom, thinks the infe-
riour person worthy to be despised. Therefore this
is to be imprinted in the first place, in the minds of
all that belong to the Church, of what Order or
Dignity soever they are of, that they ought to be
subject to their Minister, because all are sinners who
stand in need of Instruction, Exhortation, reproof
and Consolation, all which are administred by the
Ministers of the Church, by the word of God com-
mended to them, & therefore they are to be heard of all,
[*as the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries
of God.*] But if there be any that will not hear, as the
greatest part of the men of this Age will not, that
they are not to be connived at, but to be *rebuked with
all Authority.* As the Apostle directs in the last cited
place out of *Titus*, that they may understand (saith
the grave *Baldwinus*) the Authority of the Ministry
excells all worldly Power. We have already the heavy
sentence revealed against these despisers, *Luk. X. 16.*
Matth. X. 40. *Joh. XIII. 20.* But if there be any
Drones and unworthy of the Ministry, let them be
driven out of the Hive. But as to those who teach
the true Doctrine, and Religion, and Catechise in
publick and in private, and serve Christ and their
people faithfully, without any vain hopes of lucre or
of love: these I say, ought to have obedience, libera-
lity, and reverence shewn towards them; lest if we
act otherwise, by the just judgment of GOD we
should be left so far to our selves, as to maintain Se-
ducers, Hypocrites, mercenary men; those that are
covetous of great Revenues, carnal men who are to-
tally

1 Cor. IV. 1.

tally unfit for that spiritual work, idle bellies indeed of the Ministers of Christ, and such as wallow in the very mire of Pleasures and Riches, which hath already hapned, not only to our forefathers, but to some of the most flourishing Churches of these times, as we see with sorrowful hearts.

XIII. The ill, tho' frequent way of Preaching gives us the third cause of Atheism. The first duty of a Preacher, is to set forth the Power and Nature of Religion, and the second is to perswade men to Faith and good works, as all agree who know what it is. For it is in vain to exhort those men who are ignorant of the force and nature of true Positive Divinity and Religion. But a great sort of our Preachers having only lightly touched, or rather for the most part totally neglected their Text, fall presently to the exhortation, which whoever does prosecute without the knowledge of Faith and true Religion, does but play the Philosopher instead of preaching Christ, as *Philip Melancthon* has plainly pronounced in this affair. I would not have the latter omitted, but I had rather they would much oftner handle the former. For seeing the Gospel teacheth many things above our Reason, it is not possible to know which is the true Worship of God and Religion, unless we know what the Gospel teacheth. Therefore he will do most good to the Church, tho' he will not at first be so acceptable as an *English Moralist*, who can best set forth the matter of Faith, which many either totally neglect, contenting themselves with inculcating the precepts concerning manners, without delivering the sum of the Christian Religion, or do only lightly touching it, and yet after all we wonder whence it comes to pass, that those that have so many years frequented our Sermons, being asked concerning the

heads of the Christian Religion can give no account of them, when yet they never in all their lives heard much, if any thing, of them. I lament the misery of these poor sheep, but I shall never more wonder at the multitude of Atheists, and of those that are ignorant of all Religion. But in short, if the truth may be spoken, the greatest part of the Preachers never learned the *Compendium* and form of true Theologie; and what more can be expected from such men? But I know not how it comes to pass, that no Mechanick shall be suffered to exercise a Trade, who hath not spent a great time in learning of it. But all are suffered to preach without distinction or choice, nor do I at all regard the Certificates which are usually given to young beginners in some places; for how, and at what price they are purchased of the Professors is as clear as the light. But *Paul's* precept was, that the Bishop should be *apt to teach*. And he only will be such who has a right notion of Religion, and has by the assistance of the Holy Ghost had experience of the force and power of it in the various events of his life. For as a builder first forms the whole building in his mind. So the teachers of any Arts, ought to have the whole Scheme of the Arts they profess to teach in their minds that they may be able to shew the beginning and Series, or order of all the precepts. But all other Arts, because they may be comprehended by reason may be more easily apprehended, whereas the Gospel which contains many things above, and *against* the judgment of reason, is not apprehended without difficulty, and therefore the Preacher is obliged to take the more pains that he may render the most obscure things plain. And he will then be able to do this, when he has possessed his own mind with a comprehensive know-

*I cannot assent
to my Author
in this, viz. that
there is any
thing in the Go-
spel against the
judgment of
Reason illumi-
nated by Faith.*

knowledge of all the Doctrine of Religion before he begins to teach others. Therefore it will never be laborious or difficult to such a Preacher to invent what he should speak; but rather his prudence is to be employed in the chusing out of the great variety and plenty, what may seem most profitable and useful, for the whole Christian Religion is of a Divine Original, and being delivered to us in writing by the Prophets and Apostles, those writings are to be followed. Now in this, the first thing is, to understand rightly those things which he has undertaken to handle: for no man can clearly teach another that thing which he doth not thoroughly understand himself. That Verse of *Horace* is very common:

Verbaque prævisam rem non invita sequentur.

For unforc'd words wait on a well known thing.

Nor does any man attain the knowledge of the holy Scriptures by study only; but it is necessary that by instruction of the Holy Ghost he should feel the force of them in his own mind, and so be able by his own Experience and Practice to interpret them. The next thing required in a good Preacher is, that he have a good way and manner of interpreting or expressing himself; which is delivered in those precepts by which youth is instructed in Eloquence or Rhetorick. For no man can ever know the way of teaching well if he be not well instructed in Eloquence in his youth: and be very much, and a great while conversant with those Arts, in which the precepts of Rhetorick are contained. And then an Interpreter ought to know the Genius of the language, for the holy Scriptures have a certain peculiar Idiom and Phrase, which those that are not acquainted with it from their youth cannot

If the Rite of Confirmation were duly put in execution with us; no Church can take a better and more effectual care for this than ours has done.

cannot understand. Nor is it enough to have some degree of knowledge in the tongues, but to enable a man to judge well, Logick and Rhetorick are of great use. Lastly, if he be able to draw a summ, or Compendium of the whole doctrine out of the holy Scriptures, he will then endeavour that the people also may comprehend the whole Christian Doctrine. The Primitive Church seems to have aimed at this heretofore, when she took such care, that the ignorant might be thoroughly instructed before they were admitted to Baptism, whom she then called κατεχόμενοι, Catechumens. For κατηχῆν, to Catechise, doth not signifie to teach simply, but to read to a person, and make him repeat after the Teacher. And I wish the custom were retained in the Church, of exacting of every man once an account of the Doctrine; for we do more diligently consider, and deeply look into those things which we are bound to recite in other words without changing the sense.

The last cause of Atheism, we fetch from the total abolition of all Ceremonies, for we see that Religion was never more despised than in those Churches where there is no Ceremonies. For there is an absolute necessity of some external shews which may recommend and render Religion more August and Venerable to the common people, who are not able without them, to see into the greatness and dignity of this thing, and we ought not to undervalue that improvement which children make while they Sing the Psalms, Read the Bible, and repeat the Catechism aloud in the Church. For if Ceremonies are not impious, (as they are, which are instituted by the Papists for Justification,) and if there be any use of them, such as the recommending Religion to the people, and children for whose sake they were

were chiefly instituted, and both which they retain and preserve in the word, and teach, I see no reason why they should be abolished. O how earnestly do I desire that those who govern our Church-affairs would more deeply consider this last cause which at first sight appears so light and contemptible; and that they would understand what Ecclesiastical Prudence is. (concerning which we conjecture *Nicolaus Videlius* will with the assistance of God publish something in his Elegant book of the Prudence of the ancient Church) Tho' ours should at least be so unhappy as leave this thing very imperfect. It is a most impious thing, to think that all Ceremonies were instituted by wicked Popes. There ever were some wise and holy men, who thoroughly understood that the minds of the common people were so stupid and low, that they could never apprehend the Dignity and Majesty of Religion, unless their minds were fixed and detained with some outward and visible Rites, till they might by that means by degrees be more and more lifted up, and so learn to admire it. And yet I would not have too much haste made here, because *Abraham Scultetus* a prudent Divine, otherwise in this very Age left us a Tragical example of the ill effects that followed at *Prague*. And thus at length I have opened this putrid sore; and now if the work might be acceptable, and it might promote the cure of it, O how great thanks should I give to our God? but if the evil should happen to be only exasperated, and the attempt should incense the Patients; I shall comfort my self with the Conscience of my undertaking, and the usual reward of a Physician.